But who would bother? Society? We were society, the same way we were community. We were parsimonious economizing manifest. What about all the times the hospital screwed up the "meds" because they'd laid off all the trained pharmacists? What about all the times the manager sat hunched over a dosette on the little round table, picking out little bright-colored pills with his forceps, because a team with an inappropriately ballsy name had carelessly put them in the wrong slot? We had to touch the meds, with hands or forceps, or poison the tenant. One way or another, we were always getting them dirty. There were neurotoxins on our hands as well as in our sewage.

The manager overheard this exchange. I watched as she slowly removed her glasses and rubbed her brow. We'd interrupted her accounting. Later she told me to ignore Sam. He was on our health and safety committee. He'd previously never sat his ample ass on anything bigger than a toilet. He took his role too seriously. He hadn't noticed it was all cosmetic.

By then Adam had returned from the kitchen where he'd been finishing the tacos. I said Sam was a bastard. Adam said to stop complaining and "play the game." That was very British.

It bothers me to think that as Adam was getting ready to die